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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY,
FEBRUARY 4, 2003

¶1. This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for February 4, 2003. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICS, SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS

¶2. SIIRT ELECTIONS MIGHT BE CANCELLED DUE TO IRAQ WAR

(Hurriyet) A possible U.S.-led war in Iraq has overshadowed the March 9 Siirt elections, which was expected to open the way for AK Party leader Recep Tayyip Erdogan's premiership. The Higher Election Council might "postpone the elections due to de facto incapability" if Turkey enters war.

¶3. TURKISH ARMED FORCES START REPAIR PROJECTS IN BASES

(Radikal) Following the recent site surveys by a team of U.S. experts of Turkish bases and ports, the Turkish Armed Forces has unilaterally started repair projects (to upgrade these bases and ports). Preparations are underway at the Incirlik (Adana) Air Base and the Diyarbakir Airport, which will reportedly initially be used in the event of an operation against Iraq. The U.S. will meet the needs during a possible operation. On February 3, a C-5 Galaxy plane landed at Incirlik, where the U.S. is stockpiling military equipment and materials. A missile-like object and crates of spare parts from the giant cargo plane were uploaded on to two trucks. The trucks later went to a nearby warehouse. In addition, the number of KC-135 tanker planes at Incirlik has increased.

¶4. TURKEY, THE U.S. WILL ESTABLISH 15 CAMPS

(Hurriyet/Milliyet/Turkiye) Possible immigration (from Iraq) was discussed during recent evaluations held between Turkey and the U.S. To prevent a wave of immigration, 15 different camps will initially be established in northern Iraq. The number of these camps might rise to 23 if immigration increases. The U.S. Time Magazine wrote that Turkey and the U.S. had agreed to establish 17 refugee camps in the region, including 10 on the Iraqi side, if an operation started against Iraq.

¶5. SPECIAL TEAMS WILL BE WORKING IN CAMPS

(Turkiye/Milli Gazete) Officials have determined the names of nearly 1,000 people who will be working in tent cities to be established in northern Iraq in the event of a war against Iraq. The Diyarbakir Security Directorate will dispatch a team of 70 specialists to the border. Efforts are also underway to prepare a 1,000-person list of health, Tele-com, and Village Affairs Directorate personnel in Diyarbakir, Mardin, Sirnak, Batman, Hakkari, and Van. Also, the Diyarbakir National Education Directorate has produced a list of 200 teachers to serve in these tent cities.

¶6. DISPATCH OF TROOPS TO IRAQI BORDER CONTINUES
(Hurriyet/Milli Gazete) The Turkish Armed Forces is dispatching additional troops and military equipment, including armored vehicles, to its units along the (Iraqi) border. Security units have been warned against possible terrorist infiltration, and thermal cameras along the 280-km Turkish-Iraqi border are being checked. Some banks and public organizations have established mobile units. The number of tents set up by the Red Crescent has reached 300. Four other tents were set up to store humanitarian assistance. Cumhuriyet reported that troops, military equipment, and materials left Tekirdag, Adapazari, Ankara, and Istanbul are being kept in Sanliurfa for dispatch to the Southeast

after the February 11-14 Sacrifice Holiday. Bolu and Kayseri commando teams, which had been used during the anti-terror period in the Southeast, might also be dispatched to the region again.

¶7. "THERE ARE NO STANDARD SHELTERS IN TURKEY" (Turkiye/Bolge) In line with an order from the Civil Defense Directorate General, the Malatya Civil Defense Directorate held a civil defense seminar. In his speech, Malatya Civil Defense Director Ibrahim Ozay said his directorate was organizing activities in accordance with the possibility of a war that might break out as a result of the tension between the U.S. and Iraq. Ozay noted that there are no shelters built in accordance with the standards. He added that, in case of an emergency, the basement of public buildings, car parks, apartment buildings, and business centers would be used as shelters. In addition, a meeting entitled "Effects of Chemical and Biological Agents" was held in Adana's Physicians' Chamber. In his speech, Assistant Professor Ferdi Tanir of Cukurova University (Adana) said that not all shelters would save lives because the province's shelters are insufficient. Tanir stressed that shelters must be in an appropriate location and have necessary equipment to protect against chemical gases.

¶8. MERSIN BUSINESS LEADER AGAINST WAR Dunya reported that Mersin businessmen are concerned over a possible U.S.-led war in Iraq. Musa Timur, President of the Mersin Industrialists and Businessmen's Association (MESIAD), voiced opposition to a possible war, claiming that the provincial economy fell from the fifth province to the 19th on a nationwide list. "It feels like bombs dropped on Iraq have fallen on Mersin. A new war will cause the Mersin economy to hit the bottom," he added.

¶9. PRO-OCALAN PROTESTS CONTINUE (Evrensel) Demonstrations were held in Igdir, Hakkari, Batman, and Sanliurfa to protest the nine-week isolation of jailed KADEK/PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan. In Tunceli, relatives of prisoners and inmates began a hunger strike. In addition, a pro-Ocalan campaign was launched in Bismil (Diyarbakir). Under the campaign, demonstrations will be held every day until February 15. Also, pro-Ocalan marches were held in Diyarbakir's six different districts on February 3. Pro-Ocalan slogans were shouted during the marches, while police did not intervene.

¶10. NO PERMISSION FOR ANTI-WAR PRESS CONFERENCE IN DIYARBAKIR (Evrensel) The Diyarbakir Governor's Office refused to grant permission for a press conference which the Diyarbakir Democratic Youth Platform wanted to organize in protest of a possible U.S.-led operation against Iraq and prison isolation. When a group of 200 people, including women and HADEP Youth Commission members, insisted on holding the press conference, police told HADEP officials that it was unlawful to hold a press conference and wanted them their demonstration. Some members of the group instead staged a sit-down demonstration and shouted pro-KADEK/PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan slogans. Then, police intervened to disperse them. During the scuffle, many people were reportedly injured and over 20 others arrested.

¶11. TEACHERS INVESTIGATED FOR ATTENDING A RALLY (Evrensel) Under Article 130 of the Law number 657, the Diyarbakir National Education Directorate has launched an administrative investigation against sixty local teachers, all members of the State Employees' Union Confederation (KESK). The investigation stemmed from the teachers' participation in the August 2002 KESK rally in Ankara. The law requires public employees to receive official permission for travel outside their province. The Diyarbakir Egitim-Sen teachers union President, Abdullah Demirtas, called the investigation "arbitrary."

¶12. OHAL CIRCULAR STILL IN EFFECT (Evrensel) The former government of Bulent Ecevit had published a circular to prevent the

reinstatement of public employees transferred from the State of Emergency (OHAL) region. Following the lifting of OHAL, former Diyarbakir teacher Abdurrahim Kutlu petitioned the Diyarbakir Governor's Office to be reinstated. However, the Governor's Office, presumably based on the circular, refused to process Kutlu's petition, saying "it was inconsistent with the regulation."

ECONOMIC AND AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENTS

¶13. SYRIA WELCOMES PROPOSED MARKETS ALONG THE BORDER
(Turkiye) AK Party Kilis Deputy Hasan Kara, who had accompanied State Minister Kursad Tuzmen during his trip to Syria, said the Syrian government favored the idea of establishing open-air markets or free zones along the Turkish-Syrian border. During the trip aimed at increasing economic cooperation between the two countries, the Turkish delegation had met with the Syrian Prime Minister, as well as seven ministers.

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